



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 3, 2017

Ms. Judy Hickman  
Assistant Supervisor  
Beaumont Police Department  
P.O. Box 3827  
Beaumont, Texas 77704

OR2017-14807

Dear Ms. Hickman:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 664440.

The Beaumont Police Department (the "department") received a request for dash cam video, audio/video from any officer involved, and 9-1-1 voice tapes pertaining to a specified accident. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we must address the department's obligation under section 552.301 of the Government Code, which prescribes the procedures a governmental body must follow in asking this office to decide whether requested information is excepted from public disclosure. Pursuant to section 552.301(e) of the Government Code, within fifteen business days of receipt of the request, a governmental body must submit to this office (1) written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply that would allow the information to be withheld, (2) a copy of the written request for information, (3) a signed statement or sufficient evidence showing the date the governmental body received the written request, and (4) a copy of the specific information requested or representative samples, labeled to indicate which exceptions apply to which parts of the documents. Gov't Code § 552.301(e). You state the department received the request on April 14, 2017; therefore the department's fifteen-business-day deadline was May 5, 2017. However, you submitted the requested dash cam video recordings in an envelope postmarked June 13, 2017. Although you inform us there were equipment problems that delayed the submission of the dash cam

recordings, we note the fifteen-business-day deadline to submit a copy of the information requested is statutorily imposed on the department by section 552.301(e), and this office is required to adhere to this provision when determining the timeliness of the submissions made by the department for purposes of requesting a ruling under the Act. *See id.* §§ 552.301, .302, .306. Accordingly, we conclude the department has failed to comply with procedural requirements of section 552.301(e) with respect to the dash cam recordings at issue.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to submit to this office the information required in section 552.301(e) results in the legal presumption that the information is public and must be released. Gov't Code § 552.302. Information that is presumed public must be released unless a governmental body demonstrates a compelling reason to withhold the information to overcome this presumption. *Id.*; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342, 350 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381-82 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ) (governmental body must make compelling demonstration to overcome presumption of openness pursuant to statutory predecessor to Gov't Code § 552.302); Open Records Decision No. 319 (1982). The department claims sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.130 of the Government Code for the information at issue. Because sections 552.101 and 552.130 can provide compelling reasons to overcome the presumption of openness, we will address your arguments under these sections for the submitted dash cam recordings. However, we find you have failed to establish a compelling reason to address your remaining exception.

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]” Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(1) must explain how and why this exception is applicable to the information at issue. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). The department states the submitted 9-1-1 information relates to a pending criminal investigation or prosecution. Based on this representation, we conclude release of the information will interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Accordingly, we find the department may withhold the submitted 9-1-1 information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup>

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's license, driver's license, motor vehicle title or registration, or personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(a). Upon review, we find the

---

<sup>1</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure.

submitted video recordings contain information subject to section 552.130. You state the department does not have the technological capability to redact the motor vehicle record information from the video recordings at issue. Accordingly, the department must withhold the submitted video recordings in their entireties under section 552.130 of the Government Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 364 (1983).<sup>2</sup>

In summary, the department may withhold the submitted 9-1-1 information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The department must withhold the submitted video recordings in their entireties under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at [http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl\\_ruling\\_info.shtml](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml), or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Paige Lay  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

PL/som

Ref: ID# 664440

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

---

<sup>2</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure.